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Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests



United States
Department of
Agriculture

PREPARED BY
Forest
Service

Southwestern
Region

Coronado Trail Scenic Byway

The Coronado Trail Scenic Byway is an exciting 120 mile journey surrounded by the beauty and grandeur of Arizona. You will follow a route near Coronado's path as he searched for the "Seven Cities of Cibola" over 450 years ago. Your drive along U.S. Route 666/191 can begin from the communities of Springerville and Eagar in the north or from Clifton and Morenci in the South. You will experience dramatic environmental changes ranging from the cacti of the upper sonoran desert to wildflower covered alpine meadows. Literally you will travel from "palms to pines" in a few breathtaking hours.

The Coronado Trail Scenic Byway, America's first federal aid highway, will take you along the eastern edge of the two million-acre Apache Sitgreaves National Forests. Here you can enjoy a variety of wildlife. Camp in a modern campground or in an isolated forested setting of pine and fir. Fish in one of many nearby streams—a cold-water fishery among the best in the nation!

Halfway along your slow-winding journey, step out to the edge of the Mogollon Rim, a 200-mile geologic precipice dividing much of Arizona. Some places along the Rim afford views 2,000 feet above the desert floor. Stop a while at Blue Vista, a viewpoint rest stop that offers you breathtaking photographic opportunities.

No matter what time of year, you can spend days and weeks enjoying the color and beauty of America's Great Outdoors along the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway. Wildflowers abound brightened by summer monsoon rains. Spectacular yellows and golds greet you as aspen and oak mark the beginning of fall. The quiet white of winter greets the adventurous winter recreationist.

No matter which direction you travel along the Coronado Scenic Byway, stop and enjoy the friendly communities along this winding pathway as well as the area's beauty, history, and ecology. U.S. Highway 666 is currently being renumbered as U.S. Highway 191. You may encounter signage with one or both numbers.

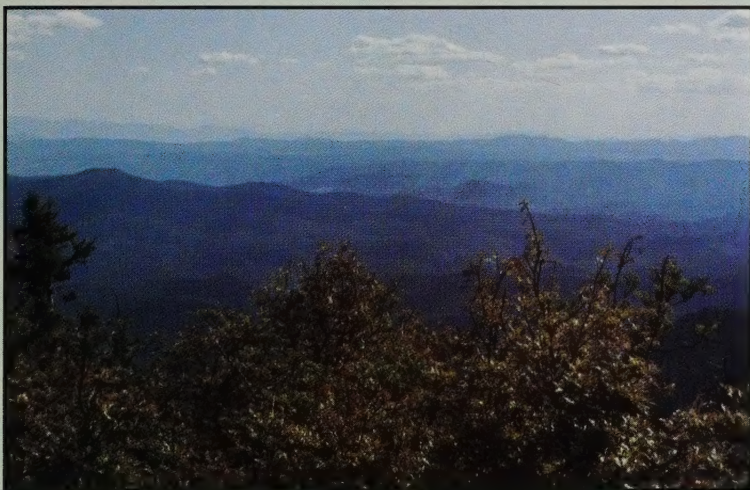
U.S. 666/191 from Springerville/Eagar to Blue Vista



PHOTO BY PATTY HACKETT



PHOTO BY NANCY HOUGH



Springerville and Eagar

Christened "Valle Redondo," or Round Valley, by the early settlers, the beautiful sister cities of Springerville and Eagar lie tucked in a high mountain valley. Far from the rush of big cities, freeways, noisy railroads, and stifling desert heat, the friendly residents enjoy a quiet, high country lifestyle full of sunshine and fresh air. Springerville and Eagar serve as "the gateway to the White Mountains." Within a half hour, you will find an abundance of tall forests, countless mountain trout streams, lakes, archaeological sites, museums, and some of the best skiing and winter recreation in Arizona.

Nelson Reservoir

Nelson Reservoir is extremely popular throughout the year with local residents. A variety of trout are stocked here, including Brook, German Brown, and Rainbow Trout. It is named after pioneer settler, Edmund Nelson, who is said to have constructed an earthen dam in the 1890's. Over the years, the dam has been rebuilt and improved. Today there are fishing stations for the physically challenged as well as new restrooms, and parking facilities. There are boat launch ramps at each end of the lake. Nelson Reservoir is also excellent for ice-fishing during the winter when ice conditions are safe.



PHOTO BY JOE GRAIN

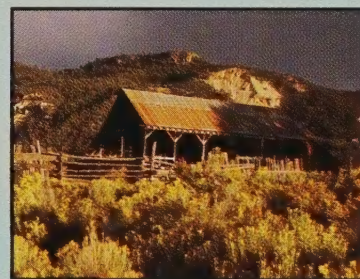
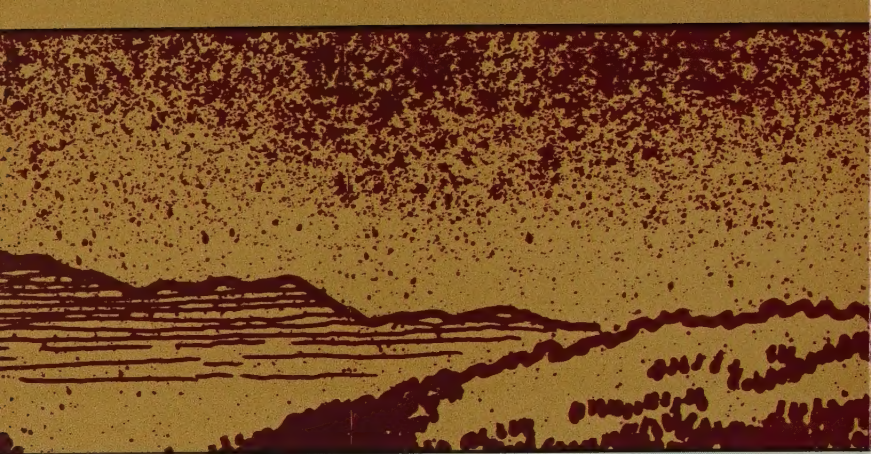


PHOTO BY BARBARA ROBERTS

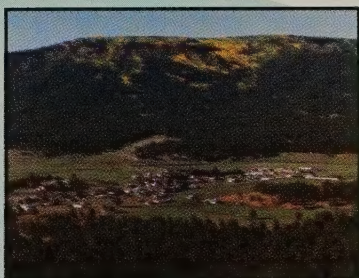
Nutrioso

The meandering creek and small community beside it were named after the Spanish words for two of the animals that roamed the area during the early settlement days, beaver (nutri) and bear (oso). Arizona's first Forest Ranger lived in Nutrioso at the turn of the century when the Apache National Forest was part of the Black Mesa Forest Reserve.



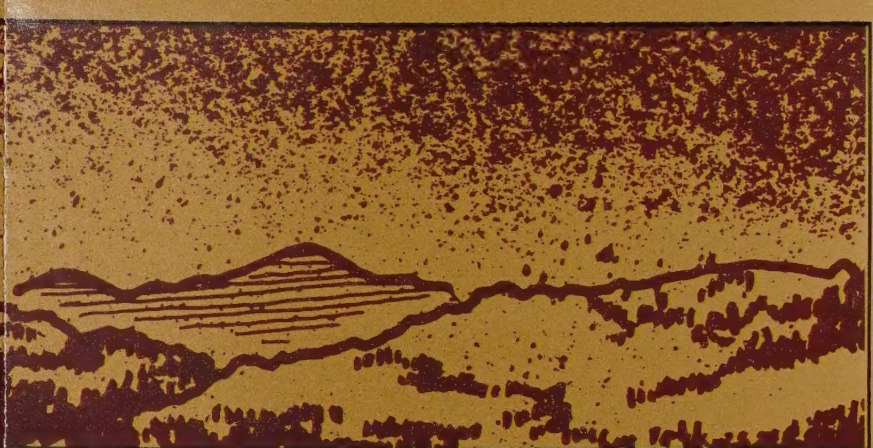
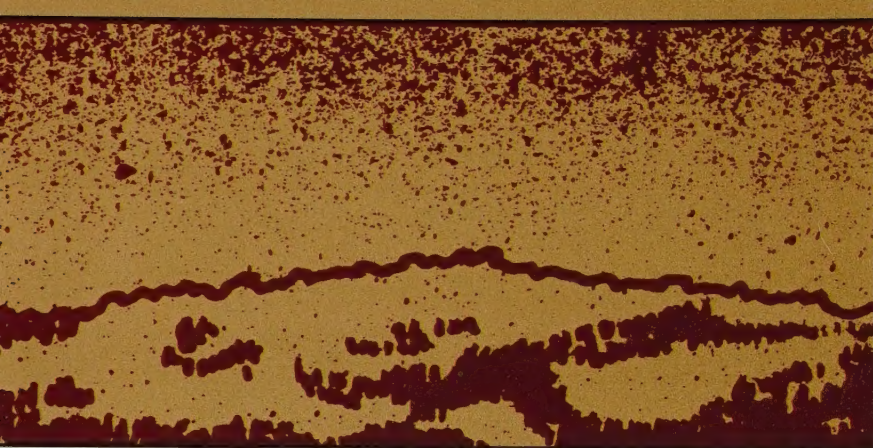
Fall Colors

Brilliant displays of golds, reds, oranges, and browns greet the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway traveler from mid-September throughout October. Nature's paintbrush interweaves a fall color spectacular throughout the vast stands of aspen, oak, maple, and mountain ash contrasted by the gentle greens of pine, fir, spruce, and juniper. This transformation of fall foliage is a feast for the eyes of visitors who arrive from all over the world. Bring your camera or brush and enjoy a side trip on any of the numerous forest roads intersecting the Scenic Byway.



Alpine

Visitors to Alpine are greeted by a captivating view of a small high country community set in the lush plains of the San Francisco River. Surrounding Alpine are spectacular and sweeping slopes of mountains covered with vast stands of pine, fir, and aspen. Alpine, which was settled in the late 1870's, was originally known as Bush Valley. Today, the "Swiss-like" setting of Alpine continues to enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike.



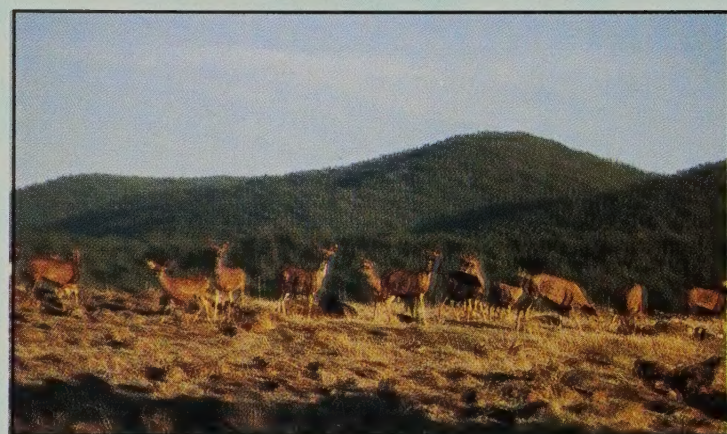
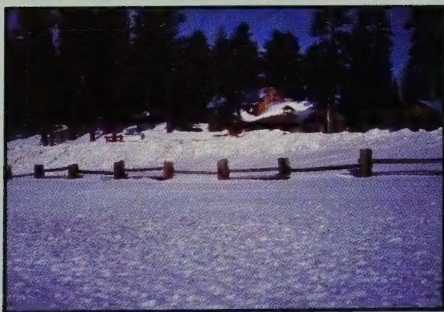
Hannagan Meadow

Hannagan Meadow is named after Robert Hannagan, a Nevada miner who engaged in cattle ranching in the 1870's. A ranger station was built near the meadow in the summer of 1912. Hannagan Meadow Lodge was built after dedication of the "Clifton to Springerville" Highway in 1926. The lodge provided rest to the weary traveler making the two-day winding trip along a then narrow and dirt roadway. Reference at the dedication was made to the highway as the "Trail of Coronado." The nickname Coronado Trail was soon adopted.

Recreation

Hannagan Meadow

Many recreational opportunities complement leisure driving along the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway. These include wildlife viewing, picnicking, rock-hounding, photography, and nature study. With a little extra preparation, you will be all set to take advantage of fantastic camping, mountain biking, and some of the best hunting and fishing anywhere. Many of these activities can be enjoyed year-round below the Rim. Above the Rim, a white mantle of snow greets the winter visitor. Here you can enjoy some of Arizona's best cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing.

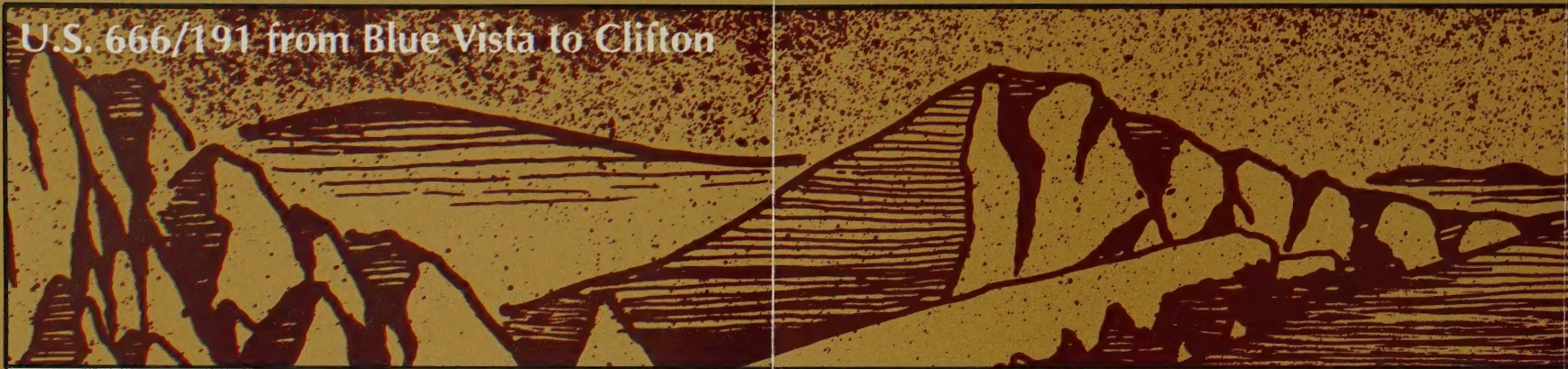


Blue Vista

The Blue Vista overlook is perched on the edge of the Mogollon Rim, the Colorado Plateau's southern border. The Rim rises some 4,000 feet above the valleys below. From Blue Vista, much of the dramatic topography of Southeast Arizona lies before you. Above the Rim, you will find beautiful forests of spruce, fir, ponderosa pine, and high mountain meadows. Below the Rim, you can see grassland savannah and piñon juniper stands in the upper Sonoran desert ecosystem. If you look toward the East, you will enjoy magnificent views of the Blue Range Mountains. These peaks rising above the Blue River are focal points of the Blue Range Primitive Area. Before you leave Blue Vista, enjoy a short hike along the nature trail, which begins at the parking lot.



U.S. 666/191 from Blue Vista to Clifton



Life Zones Along the Trail

The trip along the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway is a spectacular journey, ascending nearly 5,000 feet in elevation in only 60 miles from Clifton and Morenci heading north. The array of vegetation types that corresponds to changes in climate, soil, moisture, and elevation are referred to as "life zones." The life zones that exist in the short 127 mile trip from Clifton/ Morenci to Springerville/ Eagar are the same as what you would see on a road trip from Mexico to Canada. All this in a 4-hour drive—rather than a 4-day drive!

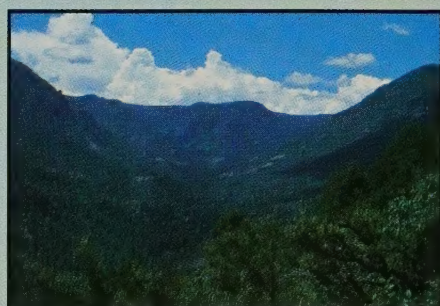
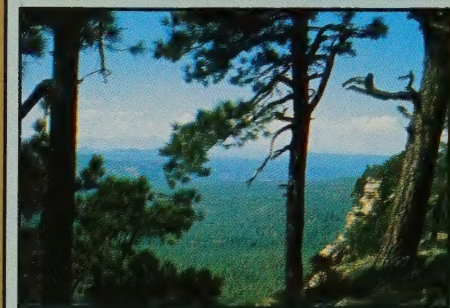


PHOTO BY: AMI NEWTON

Blue Range Primitive Area

The Blue Range Primitive Area is the only remaining primitive area in the National Forest System, and remains one of Arizona's untouched and little known jewels. Although still under the old designation of "primitive area," the 187,000-acre Blue Range is managed the same as other wilderness areas. This is a vast area of rugged topography that contains numerous trails for the hiker and horseback rider. The area receives light use and can be accessed from the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway at numerous trailhead locations.



PHOTO BY: EDWARD J. PFEIFER



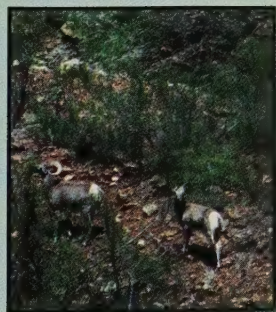
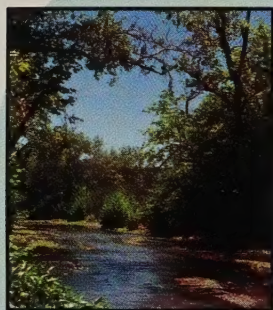
PHOTO BY: EDWARD J. PFEIFER

Rose Peak

Rose Peak with an elevation of over 8,700 feet can be seen along much of the Coronado Trail. The mountain, named for an abundance of wild roses, holds a fire lookout that has been in use since the early 1900's. Early lookouts were simple platforms built on a tower. The current lookout tower was built in 1929, and then improved in later years. The lookout is staffed from May to July during the peak of fire season. Dry lightning (lightning storms without much rain) often occurs during this time before the summer monsoon rains begin. A forest road, open during fire season, and a trail lead to the mountain top. Visitors are welcome to picnic nearby or enjoy views from the tower. Mountain peaks over 100 miles away can be seen on a clear day.

Wildlife

Wildlife abound on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. The eastern portion of the forest surrounding the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway contains most of the species found across the entire forest. The Apache-Sitgreaves has over 400 species of fish and wildlife ranging from big game like elk, deer, antelope, and bear to smaller species such as squirrels, chipmunks, and a variety of birds. There are over 450 miles of fishable streams across the forest and approximately 2,000 surface acres of cold water lake habitat. This forest has traditionally been one of the top ten fishing forests in the entire National Forest System. Species include rainbow, German brown, cutthroat, as well as Arctic Grayling. Whether you prefer spin or flycasting—bring your favorite fishing gear and try your luck!



Morenci

Mining in Morenci began over a century ago with a few hardy pioneer miners extracting copper underground. The open pit copper mine consolidated several underground mines when first developed in 1937. As the open pit expanded, it encroached upon Old Morenci. A new modern town was built and Old Morenci became a part of the open pit. Operated by Phelps Dodge, this mine is North America's leading copper producer. Free tours are given on weekdays by appointment.

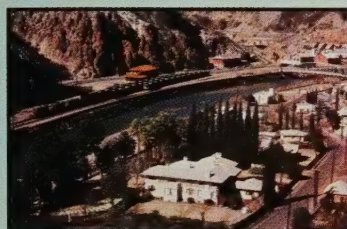


PHOTO BY: EDWARD J. PFEIFER



PHOTO BY: HAL WARD



Clifton

Clifton, nestled in a rugged canyon carved by the San Francisco River, was founded in the 1870's. Early miners utilized river waters to operate their crude copper smelters. The old Southern Pacific depot remains the town's centerpiece. "Copperhead," a baby-gauge steam engine, was retired from service in the 1920's. A unique landmark is the old Clifton jail, blasted from a cliff face. Historic Chase Creek business district has outstanding original Territorial architecture. Shootouts, saloons, and promises of instant wealth were the pulse of the old West. That spirit can still be found today.



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For further information on the communities and activities along the Coronado Trail Scenic Byway, please contact:

**Greenlee County
Chamber of Commerce**
(602) 865-3313

Morenci Mine Tours (free by
appointment on weekdays)
(602) 865-4521 ext 435

Alpine Chamber of Commerce
(602) 339-4330

**Round Valley Chamber of
Commerce** (Springerville and
Eagar area)
(602) 333-2123

**Apache-Sitgreaves National
Forests Supervisor's Office**
(602) 333-6292
(Hearing Impaired TDD)

Alpine Ranger District
(602) 339-4384
(Hearing Impaired TDD)

Clifton Ranger District
(602) 865-4129
(Hearing Impaired TDD)

Springerville Ranger District
(602) 333-4372
(602) 333-6335
(Hearing Impaired TDD)

